

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, when is House Republican leadership going to allow a vote on the minimum wage bill to come to this floor? A clean minimum wage bill? As health care, grocery, and energy costs skyrocket for average consumers, House Republican leadership would rather help their CEO friends than average Americans who are just trying to make ends meet.

The fact is that the median annual household income has actually increased by \$1,700 after inflation during the course of the Bush administration. The fact is that today, full-time workers who earn the minimum wage are bringing home a paltry \$10,700.

This is simply not fair. House Republican leadership have refused to allow a clean minimum wage vote. Close to 15 million Americans will be affected if we did this. Do Republicans really expect a family to live on less than \$11,000 a year?

Contrary to what the President and Republican leadership would have you believe, everything is not coming up roses when it comes to our national economy. There are more poor, more uninsured than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, no congressional pay raise until minimum wage is increased, period. It is time we pass a minimum wage bill so that 6 million Americans get a much-deserved pay raise.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 2429, and I know what you are going to say, but I ask it anyway.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded on page 734 of the House Rules Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the gentleman's request until it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

RUBBER-STAMP CONGRESS

(Mr. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an outright shame what the Republican majority has done. They have expressed themselves as the rubber-stamp Republican majority to the Bush White House.

As you know, yesterday we took a vote here on this floor as relates to going into closed session to talk about the findings of the National Intelligence Estimate. I will tell you these are professionals that are working in clandestine agencies not only in this country, but throughout the world, and it is very, very important that the American people understand what is going on in Iraq.

We can only come to the floor and try to put forth some sort of represen-

tation on behalf of the American people on the Democratic side.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are right here. When it came down to voting for us to go into closed session to talk about national security, talk about the loss of our troops in Iraq, talk about those that are wounded, you want to talk about honor.

The bottom line is that one Republican voted to go into closed session to talk about this National Intelligence Estimate; and 215 Republicans voted against it; 14 didn't even show up to vote.

The bottom line is that the Democrats are willing to secure this country as we were voted and federalized to come up here and to do so. So when you walk up to this well here and see this word "justice," give the American people some justice so we can go into closed session and protect the United States of America and not come to this floor and just talk. We are about action.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has allowed Members to exceed the 1-minute time limit in completing their thoughts, but the Chair would request that Members abide more closely by the 1-minute concept.

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION

(Mr. BERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to keep in their hearts and minds and certainly in your prayers our men and women in uniform and those on the battlefield this morning.

Mr. Speaker, it is time, it is time for a new direction. It is time for health care that the American people can afford.

It is time for Social Security that we can depend on. It is time to have jobs that do not disappear. And it is amazing, it demonstrates the way the big oil companies have managed to abuse the American people to the point where they think \$2.15 for gasoline is a good deal. That is shocking.

It is time for us to go in a new direction: Leadership that honestly serves our goals of peace and prosperity, security by getting the job done rather than blaming somebody else because of the failures of this administration.

It is time to go in this new direction, and we should not recess this Congress until these goals are reached.

HONORING OFFICER RODNEY
JOHNSON

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank God for our peace officers; and I especially thank God for Officer Rodney Johnson, who will be laid to rest today.

On Thursday he left the comfort and safety of his home so we might be safe in our homes. On Thursday, he put his life at risk so that our lives would not be at risk. On Thursday, he sacrificed his life so that we might have a better life.

A wife has lost a husband, children have lost their father, humanity has lost a great humanitarian.

Thank God for peace officer Rodney Johnson. May he rest in peace.

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS

(Mr. WATT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have throughout a long period of time led the fight against HIV and AIDS by insisting on the creation of a global fund to attack it internationally, insisting that we address the issue here in the United States, and that we take it as a serious proposition. Unfortunately, as we have been addressing it, it has grown to epidemic proportions in the African-American community here right in our own backyard.

And so we will have today a series of speakers coming to address that issue from the Congressional Black Caucus because we think it is time for the United States to declare a state of emergency and we are intent on taking the lead ourselves on this issue to dramatize it in our own communities, to talk about it, to be tested ourselves, to insist on mandatory testing, and support some new initiatives that will address this problem and get it in control in this country.

□ 1030

THE 9/11 COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS:
INTEROPERABILITY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I wrote you to take action on measures that would fulfill many of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

On 9/11, the Commission's Republican Chair and Democratic Vice Chair expressed bipartisan concern that 5 years later, some of the most "elementary and fundamental" recommendations haven't been done. They said that "there is nothing more important on the agenda of any policymaker than to make the people of this country more secure."

Now they have told us, among other things, that we need to absolutely do interoperability.